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ABSTRACT

Most of what has been taught in the language classroom for a long while has been generally a reflection of the particular concept of language popular among linguistics at the time, but recently this trend has begun to break down. Recent texts are starting to be organized according to considerations besides linguistic criteria, for example, psychological and pedagogical criteria. We are becoming increasingly more aware that linguistics should not be viewed as the sole source of information about the nature of communication. That language study should not be the exclusive province of experts in one area of academic specialization is demonstrated with the example of "extra-sententials." These are various expressions used in verbal communication, such as "in all seriousness" and "to begin with," which have no grammatical connection to the sentence but refer instead to the locutionary expressions, to some aspect of the various kinds of speech acts. These expressions, considered in relation to a set of postulates that accompany speech acts, have three main functions: (1) a neutral verbalization of the postulate, (2) raising the possibility of doubt as to whether the postulate is being adhered to, and (3) rectifying a violation of a conversational postulate. Extra-sententials, then, are tools for communication, and some way should be devised to include them in language instruction. More attention should be given in language teaching to the communication situation, that is, to the perceptions and intentions of the participants. (CLK)

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COMMUNICATION'S THE NAME OF THE GAME*

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I have here a message for us from the eminent Danish linguist, Otto Jespersen. He says, and I quote, "The essence of language is human activity --activity on the part of one individual to make himself understood by another, and activity on the part of that other to understand what was in the mind of the first. These two individuals, the producer and the recipient of language, or as we may more conveniently call them, the speaker and the hearer, and their relations to one another, should never be lost sight of if we want to understand the nature of language and of that part of language which is dealt with in grammar."

This very sensible piece of advice is to be found in Jespersen's book The Philosophy of Grammar; indeed, it is the very opening passage of chapter one, which carries the rather apt title "Living Grammar." And I think that the Jespersen passage is not a bad way to ease into the matter of communication's being "the name of the game," reflecting a title that came into being, incidentally, three months before the paper that now goes with it.

For a long while now a significant portion of our concept of what constitutes language---or at least that kind of language which is to be taught in the classroom---has been a reflection of the particular concept of language happening to hold sway among the linguists of the day. As a consequence, the language object that found its way into the classroom was the product of an "application" of what linguists were then researching and writing about, and the time lag between theory and application was not much longer than the time it took a manuscript to go through the editorial mill. Furthermore, some of the theoreticians (Fries, Hall, Twaddell, etc.) were their own practitioners. At the 1968 TESOL Convention in San Antonio, David DeCamp called attention to this fact in a paper titled "The current discrepancy between theoretical and applied linguistics." DeCamp noted that "during the 1940's and early 1950's nearly every major linguist authored at least one language textbook," citing a whole list of examples. Then he followed with the lamentation, "But where are the language textbooks written by Chomsky, Halle, Postal, Klima, Fillmore, Ross, or even textbooks which seem to be very much influenced by them?" Well, I, for one, am not sorry that Chomsky and Halle have not found either the time or, more likely, the inclination to write a language text. There would be no more reason to expect useful classroom materials to emerge from the MIT linguistic circle than there would be to expect a significant contribution to grammatical theory, say, from Columbia Teacher's College. And why should there be, as long as we do not hold to the narrow view that linguistics is the sole repository of information about what happens when people communicate. The image of the theoretical linguist running from the research room to the classroom with the latest word

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is no longer valid, if indeed it ever was. DeCamp's thesis in 1968 was that a "discrepancy" (whatever that term means in this context) between linguistic theory and classroom practice was necessarily undesirable. Most of you would, I hope, agree with me that now, only six years later, such discrepancies are not necessarily undesirable. Indeed, they may no longer even be a major issue.

A glance at the tables of contents of some of the language materials being published these days is revealing. It may only be my imagination, but it seems to me that the generalizations that are being laid out for the student--indisputably, I think, one of the purposes of a text--are starting to be organized according not only to syntactic criteria but also, where it suits our purposes, to semantic, psychological, pragmatic, and pedagogical criteria. For example, instead of treating all the subjunctive forms together in a lump as language texts so often do, one recent book breaks up the subjunctive into its different uses, letting the "suggestion" use appear with other ways of making suggestions, letting the unreal situation use appear with other ways of talking about unreal situations, letting the necessity and urgency use appear with other ways of conveying necessity and urgency. Another text at one point gathers together various syntactic items traditionally treated separately as passive, cleft sentence, pseudo-cleft, emphatic stress, and word order change and puts them all under the rubric of "topicalization." In short, linguistic considerations for the arrangement of language form within a pedagogical text are not the only considerations; moreover, they may turn out after all to be not even the most important ones.

We are realizing more and more that language study is not the exclusive province for expertise of any one of our areas of academic specialization. What is important for successful teaching and successful learning has to be gleaned from a large number of potential contributors, including linguistics, to be sure, but also sociology, educational psychology, perhaps even communication theory, but most certainly also practical common sense and our own every-day awareness of the communication experience. William Slager in an article in TESOL Quarterly this year emphasizes the importance of the language teacher in the communicative aspects of language learning. He talks about letting the teacher be a so-called "collector of contexts." Slager writes (p.49) that "a textbook...is properly regarded as a series of lessons each one of which may be more or less successful in blending grammar and context. Rightfully used, it should be no more than a kind of outline. If this view is accepted, it implies an important creative role for the classroom teacher; for it is the teacher who is ultimately responsible for adapting each lesson to meet the specific needs and interests of his students. The teacher, as well as the textbook writer, must be a contextualizer."

I would go even further and say that the teacher can be a collector not only of contexts but also sometimes of what goes into those contexts. There are numerous bits of commonly used language that are seldom if ever touched upon in textbooks. One whole such area is that of the so-called "extrasententials," that vast collection of syntactic forms of many varieties which, in linguistic terms, never form a constituent with the sentences to which they are attached, yet are indispensable for communicative precision and for the

natural-sounding give and take of discourse. I'm referring to adverbs like confidentially, frankly, personally, seriously, briefly, etc.; prepositional phrases like in all seriousness, in short, in my opinion, for one thing, for your information, from my experience, from a technical standpoint, just out of curiosity, just between you and me, as one teacher to another, and maybe a hundred more; infinitive phrases like to continue where we left off, to change the subject, to say nothing of, to begin with, to tell you the truth, to make a long story short, to be exact, etc; participial phrases like roughly speaking, speaking of, picking up where we left off, using the word loosely, turning to a different subject, judging from the results, quoting the L.A.Times, etc.; if clauses like if you know what I mean, if I may interrupt, if I understand what you're saying, if you don't mind my asking, if I remember correctly, if you'll pardon the expression, etc; and other subordinate clauses such as while we're on the subject, as I was saying, unless I'm mistaken, in case you're wondering, since you ask, before you begin. etc..

These expressions are by no means isolated linguistic oddities. They recur in discourse with great frequency, and there are many many more of them than the sampling that I just gave you would suggest. Syntactically, they are distinctly different from their counterparts within the sentence proper, as evidenced by pairs like In plain view the thieves made off with the crown jewels/In plain English, the thieves made off with the crown jewels; or Marvin has given up teaching to write short stories/Marvin has given up teaching, to make a long story short; or Mary doesn't know if you ask her/Mary doesn't know, if you ask me; or As I was talking there was this loud crash/As I was saying, there was this loud crash.

What all of these expressions, representing a variety of syntactic forms, have in common is their reference to some aspect of one of the various kinds of speech acts. These expressions have no grammatical connection with the sentence to which they are attached, but refer instead in some way to the locutionary expressions, whether to attach them to the abstractly represented speech act, or in some round-about way to the actually spoken sentence. But we don't have to wait for linguistics to resolve the dilemma, for in ESL pedagogy there is no such dilemma. What is important is that communication will be severely impeded without the means for the speakers' being able economically to say that he is continuing where he previously left off, or that he is changing the subject, or making a long story short, or talking confidentially, or interrupting. I would like for the next moment or two to set this aspect of communication into a broader framework.

A number of writers, both philosophers and linguists, have made attempts to tabulate the types of conditions that one has to assume lie behind the execution of different kinds of speech acts. One such tabulation has been offered by the philosopher, H.P. Grice. Grice's overriding principle of communication, called the Cooperation Principle, can be abbreviated as follows:

> "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (from Fraser, p. 27)

Next apply the following "subordinate maxims:"

Quantity
- Make your contribution as informative as necessary.
- Do not contribute more than necessary.

Quality
- Try to make your contribution one that is true.
- Do not say what you believe to be false.
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relevance-Be relevant

Manner
- Be perspicuous
- Be clear
- Be unambiguous
- Be as brief as possible
- Be orderly.

Now, if we go further and intermix the additions and modifications that have been proposed by linguists such as Fraser and Lakoff and change the syntax from that of advice-giving---a kind of Pollonius' Precepts for conversation---to that of the stated principle, we have a more or less complete set of maxims or postulates for conversation. As I go through these postulates one by one, notice that they contain propositions that come remarkably close to the events and characteristics referred to by those locutionary expressions which I cited a moment ago. In fact, let's match a few of these expressions to each postulate:

(1) There is by mutual agreement, usually tacit, a common subject of conversation (while we're on the subject, to change the subject, turning now to NP)

(2) The speaker has the attention of the hearer, or the hearer focuses attention on the speaker. (listen, if you'll pay attention, while I have your attention, let me call your attention to NP, may I have your attention please)

(3) Each allows the other in turn to speak. (now it's your turn to speak, you were saying, if I may be allowed to say something, before you begin)

(4) The speaker imposes a certain internal order on the elements of his utterance. (in the first place, in conclusion, to begin with, looking first at NP, first, finally, last, next)

(5) Harmony is the norm, as reflected in a certain decorum. (whether you

like it or not, to show you there are no hard feelings)

(5a) Speaker and hearer try not to be offensive to one another. (if you don't mind my asking/saying so, if I may say so, if I do say so myself, if I may ask, so to speak, as it were)

(5b) The speaker wishes to obtain advance absolution from the hearer in anticipation of possible displeasure at what the speaker says. (if you'll pardon the expression, if I may be so bold)

(6) Questions customarily elicit answers. (unless you don't want to tell me, since you ask)

(6a) A question implies that the speaker doesn't know the answer to the question, except for rhetorical and examination questions. (as if I didn't know)

(7) Assertions are meant to inform and they assume a willing reception. (for your information, if you want my opinion, in case you didn't know/were wondering, for whatever it's worth, in the truest sense of the term, without exaggeration)

(7a) Assertions are assumed to be truthful, unless doubts are expressed. (if you want to know the truth, if we can believe NP, if I remember correctly, unless I miss my guess, truthfully, if I know NP)

(8) The speaker expresses his own viewpoint, or the speaker believes what he says. (for all I know, as far as I'm concerned, in my opinion, personally, for my part, without a doubt, speaking as NP)

(9) The speaker strives to speak directly, clearly, and at enough length to express what he has to say. (do I make myself clear, exactly, precisely, to be exact/precise, using the word loosely)

(10) The hearer strives to understand the speaker. (if I understand what you're saying, if I understand/read you correctly, if you know what I mean, if you follow me, I take it that S)

Verbal references to the postulates, as in the examples just cited, appear to be serving one of three functions. The first, represented by the larger number of expressions, is merely a "neutral" verbalization of the postulate (e.g., while I have your attention, if you want to know the truth). With the second function the speaker raises the possibility of doubt as to whether the postulate is being adhered to (e.g., if I may be allowed to say something, do I make myself clear). Expressions serving this function, where we find the allusions to possible violation, in effect weaken the postulate. Not surprisingly, this weakening takes place almost exclusively through the use of conditional and concessive clauses. The third function is one in which the speaker seeks to rectify a violation of the postulate, where the infringement can be either a fact or a possibility (e.g., if you'll pay attention, as if I didn't know).

The postulates are assumed to apply unless something is expressed to weaken or nullify them, and we have just seen examples of this. But subordinate to the postulates, and also in another dimension from them, are what we might call "rhetorical modifiers," which serve to define, characterize, or constrict the particular way in which a postulate bears on the conversational event, referring to such conditions as state of privacy, stength of illocution, embellishment, summation, resumption, paraphrase, condensation, repetition, exemplification, addition, contrast, similarity, and undoubtedly others. These modifications, in contrast to the postulates, are assumed to apply only when expressly invoked by the speaker. Thus, although the second postulate leaves open the question of whether or not the speaker has the attention of more than one hearer, the use of the rhetorical modifer <u>just between you and me</u> will remove the possibility of there being more than one. The seventh postulate says nothing about the strength or weakness of the speaker's assertion, but the word <u>period</u> at the close of his assertion will make it stronger, while at the same time indicating that what he has to say has been sufficiently expressed (9th postulate). Although the first postulate does not mention that something does NOT occur as the subject of conversation, a non-subject can be directly cited by means of the modifier <u>ignoring</u> for the moment NP. These rhetorical modifers, then, together with the conditions to which they make reference, group something like this:

(state of privacy) - just between you and me, as one NP to another, confidentially

(strength of illocution) - to be blunt about it, to put it mildly/bluntly, if I do say so myself, if I have anything to say about it, if you ask me, I should say so, you're telling me, I'll say it is, you can say that again, telling it like it is

(embellishment) - to elaborate/elaborating on NP

(summation) - in summation, to recap, to sum up, summing up, recapping

(resumption) - to continue/pick up, to return to NP, to resume NP, picking up/continuing where we left off

(paraphrase) - in other words, in plain English, in the words of NP, in so many words, to quote NP, to borrow a term from NP, quoting NP, put another way, as the saying goes, as NP says

(condensation) - in short/brief, in a word, in essence, in a nutshell, to make a long story short

(repetition) - for the last time, once and for all

(addition) - in addition, moreover, furthermore, also, besides, next

(exemplification) - for example, for instance, to name a few names, to give you an idea/example, taking something as an example

(contrast) - on the contrary, on the other hand, rather, in contrast, in comparison

(similarity) - in like manner, likewise

(focus) - particular, particularly, strictly/generally speaking, considering NP, concentrating on NP, ignoring for the moment NP, namely, specifically, in rough terms, roughly

(motivation) - just out of curiosity, to satisfy your curiosity

(parenthesis) - by the way, speaking of NP, with reference to NP, on the subject of NP, incidentally, referring to NP, come to think of it, paranthetically

The fact that the locutionary expressions and rhetorical modifiers in this extensive tabulation are indispensable for all levels of communication cannot be overstressed. We are fortunate, however, in that for once extreme utility, manageable vocabulary, and relative syntactic simplicity all characterize the same set of items. I say "syntactic simplicity" a little guardedly, however, knowing full well that linguistics and philosophy are constantly demonstrating that language appears to be ever more complex, and in ways previously undreamed of. Yet, it is worth noting several heartening facts in all this. One is that students somehow never have to be taught the syntax of these forms. The foreign student always knows that when he is talking the "understood" subject of those to verb and verb-ing locutions is himself, and this may well have something to do with another one of those hotly pursued linguistic universals. Another heartening fact is that a student is perhaps less "free" to make errors of syntax in using extra-sentential expressions than he is in the corresponding intra-sentential syntax. This is because he will have far fewer worries, for example, about subcategorial restrictions on the choice between infinitives and participles. With the locutionary expressions they are often interchangeable (e.g., to change the subject/changing the subject, to put it bluntly/putting it bluntly); even more remarkable, however, is that locutionary expressions permit semantic equivalence over widely disparate syntax, ranging in the most extreme cases over manner adverts, prepositional phrases, infinitivals, gerundives, participials, and if clauses (e.g., compare frankly, in all frankness, to put it frankly, putting it frankly, put frankly, if I can put it frankly). How can the student miss if EVERYTHING is grammatical? Ah, but what he does need to know is when and where to use such locutions, if not the self-explanatory ones at least some others like on the one hand/on the other hand. (Recently, a description of a jungle scene submitted by one of our students, who obviously wasn't thinking extra-sententially, came out as "On the one hand there was a tiger; on the other hand there was a rhinoceros.")

Locutionary expressions are tools for communication. By themselves, they carry very little, if any, propositional content; rather, they are often the means by which the speaker inflects the tone of his utterance, gains or keeps the attention of his hearer, relinquishes the floor, signals the sentence type to follow, or interrupts a previous speaker. The importance of teaching foreign

students when, where, and how to interrupt without being rude---in other words, to gain the floor---was admirably demonstrated by Fraida Dubin in a paper presented at this year's TESOL Conference in San Juan. She attacks "the problem of devising strategies for teaching interactional rules in English" by suggesting classroom exercises in which students try to break into ongoing conversations using various techniques, or they re-play scenes where they change one feature of the role-relationships, the setting, the degree of intimacy, or the occupation of the participants. The sociologist, Allen Grimshaw, told the 1972 TESOL Convention of his interest in "the possibilities of a universal syntax of social interaction." He writes that "the varieties of behavior described by scholars who have studied questioning, or teaching, or learning in different societies may obscure....the probable existence of a set of underlying principles and relations which hold for all such behavior---however different surface manifestations may be" (p.107). I believe that research of all these kinds is going to play an increasingly important role in the construction of classroom materials that will be appearing in the years to come. Linguistics is already making us aware of the need to take into account factors of situational context in order to explain syntax that previously was thought to be well understood. I should probably have said that linguistics is STILL making us aware, for those of us previously caught in the transformational spell tend to forget that many linguists of other doctrinal persuasions never doubted the importance of contextual matters. Robin Lakoff expressed it very well last year in an issue of Language: "As should be apparent to anyone familiar with other than purely transformational linguistic tradition, the notion that contextual factors, social and otherwise, must be taken into account in determining the acceptability and interpretation of sentences is scarcely new. It has been anticipated by a veritable Who's Who of linguistics and anthropology: Jespersen, Sapir, Malinowski, Firth, Nida, Pike, Hymes, Friedrich, Tyler, and many others. But the idea has not merely been forgotten by transformational grammar; rather, it has been explicitly rejected." (p.926) Even an educational psychologist, John Carroll, has pointed out that "it is impossible to write, in the usual linguistic manner, rules about the proper use of the definite and indefinite articles in English. One must make an appeal to the communicative situation---to the perceptions and intentions of speaker and hearer" (p.106). Let me repeat this last sentence of Carroll's for you: One must make an appeal to the communicative situation---to the perceptions and intentions of speaker and hearer. Does this ring a bell? Well, it happens to bear a remarkable similarity to the quotation from Jespersen that I began with in my opening paragraph. The fact that in the 1970's Carroll and a growing number of linguists still have to remind us of the very fundamentals that Jespersen was concerned with half a century ago only serves to underscore how little we've progressed in the area of understanding language as communication. Let's hope and pray that those of you who are still around fifty years from now will not have to see the wheel come full circle once again.

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